

Divergent managerial approaches: The increasing professionalism of UK arts festival management

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Overview

- Research Methods
- Definitions
- Professionalisation
- Communities of practice
- Job recruitment
- Education & training
- 'Types' of organisers
- Role of volunteers
- Programming content
- Conclusions



Research context & methods

- Study of 'combined arts festivals'
 - Defined as those containing more than one genre of arts
 - 40% of all arts festivals in the UK (*Rolfe, 1992*)
- 42-question mail-back survey questionnaire
 - 117 CAF (2003)
 - 56% response rate
 - 66 CAF in sample
 - Analysed by size and years in existence
- In-depth interviews with 18 organisers (2004)
 - Based on festival size and years in existence
- Case studies (2004-5)
 - Cardiff Festival
 - Henley Festival
 - Lichfield Festival
 - Lafrowda Festival (Cornwall)

How does 'occupation' become 'profession'?

- Creation of specialist body of knowledge – university qualification
- Control over specialised client market
- Establishment of specialist work practice & responsibilities



(Bounds, 2004, 256)

Festival management professionalisation elements

- Education & Training
- Trade associations
- Qualifications & 'best practice'
- Advances in recruitment
- Research standards
- Formal organisational structure



Communities of practice



- Furthering employment respectability
- Publicising festivals in their 'communities'
- Publishing best practice reports
- Hosting conferences
 - Industry, academia, public & private sectors
 - Landmark locations to promote status, importance and respectability

Standards for recruitment

- Degree / Qualification
- Experience in management skills
- Knowledge of contemporary festival issues
- Competitive salary
 - Shift from amateur volunteers --> professional career opportunity
 - Emphasis on business skills rather than arts knowledge

Education & Training



- 85% event professionals plan on continuing education to stay current and further career (*Goldblatt, 2000*)
- HE & FE courses
 - Business, Management & Marketing
 - Cultural studies / Social Science
 - Tourism, Hospitality & Leisure
 - 'Eventology'
- Academia : research, publications, methods, conferences, consultancy, exchange of ideas

'Types' of arts festival organisers

- 'Traditional' organisers
 - Volunteer, part-time or seasonal hire
 - Resident, part of community
 - Amateur performances, some professionals
 - Small (less 10,000 attendees)
 - Few festival events per day
 - Motivated by passion for arts and/or giving back to the community
 - Views organisation as social activity
 - Plans for future include continuing organising same festival or retiring from organisation

Pros and Cons of 'traditional' organiser

- Knows community and what they like
- Passionate about arts – makes it priority
- Not trying to achieve broader goals, so focus on festival itself
- Festival hinges on dedication on one person or small group of individuals
- Reliant on good will
- Not sustainable for future because systems not in place
 - Funding implications

'Types' of arts festival organisers

- 'Professional' managers
 - Paid, full-time
 - Not from the place, often move to take job
 - Regional, national, international level
 - Degree / qualification, focus on business skills
 - Apply business models for future of festival
 - Professional performances, national & int'l
 - Develop festival and make contributions to place
 - Move on from role to more senior positions

Professional organisation but volunteer run

- 86% use volunteers year round to maintain festival operations
- Average number of volunteers
 - Small: 36
 - Medium: 73
 - Large: 110
- Average number of paid staff
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ no paid staff
 - Small: 3
 - Medium: 7
 - Large: 16



Programming content

- 'Traditional' and 'Professional' include and exclude similar content
- 'Traditional'
 - More popular
 - Community-focused
- 'Professional'
 - Opera
 - Fireworks



Events <i>included</i> by <i>both</i> traditional and professional organisers	Events <i>excluded</i> by <i>both</i> traditional and professional organisers	Events found in more <i>traditional</i> organisers' festivals	Events found in more <i>professional</i> organiser's festivals	Events found in about <i>half</i> of both types of festivals (inconclusive)
All music except opera	Ballet	Folk dance	Opera	Contemporary dance
Stilt walkers	Mela	Drama	Fireworks	Fringe
Poetry	Mime	Carnival		Street performances
All visual arts	All film	Puppetry		Comedy
Children's		Musicals		
Free events		Fiction		

Conclusions



- Cultural policies
- Programming policies
- Funding policies
- Proliferation
- Increased competition
- Future sustainability
- Career opportunities